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## THE NEGRO MIGRATION TO CANADA AFTER THE PASSING OF THE FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT

When President Fillmore signed the Fugitive Slave Bill<sup>1</sup> on September 18, 1850, he started a Negro migration that continued up to the opening of the Civil War, resulting in thousands of people of color crossing over into Canada and causing many thousands more to move from one State into another seeking safety from their pursuers. While the free Negro population of the North increased by nearly 30,000 in the decade after 1850, the gain was chiefly in three States, Ohio, Michigan and Illinois. Connecticut had fewer free people of color in 1860 than in 1850 and there were half a dozen other States that barely held their own during the period. The three States showing gains were those bordering on Canada where the runaway slave or the free man of color in danger could flee when threatened. It is estimated that from fifteen to twenty thousand Negroes entered Canada between 1850 and 1860, increasing the Negro population of the British provinces from about 40,000 to nearly 60,000. The greater part of the refugee population settled in the southwestern part of the present province of Ontario, chiefly in what now comprises the counties of Essex and Kent, bordering on the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair. This large migration of an alien race into a country more sparsely settled than any of the Northern States might have been expected to cause trouble, but records show that the Canadians received the refugees with kindness and gave them what help they could.<sup>2</sup> At the close of the Civil War

<sup>1</sup> "One of the most assailable laws ever passed by the Congress of the United States. . . . Under this act . . . the Negro had no chance; the meshes of the law were artfully contrived to aid the master and entrap the slave." Rhodes, *History of the United States*, I, 185.

<sup>2</sup> "A large proportion of the colored persons who have fled from the free states have sought refuge in Canada where they have been received with remarkable kindness and have testified the grateful sense of their reception by their exemplary conduct." American Anti-slavery Society, annual report for 1851, p. 31.

many of the Negroes in exile returned, thus relieving the situation in Canada.

The Fugitive Slave Bill had been signed but a month when Garrison pointed out in *The Liberator* that a northward trek of free people of color was already under way. "Alarmed at the operation of the new Fugitive Slave Law, the fugitives from slavery are pressing northward. Many have been obliged to flee precipitately leaving behind them all the little they have acquired since they escaped from slavery."<sup>3</sup> The American Anti-Slavery Society's report also notes the consternation into which the Negro population was thrown by the new legislation<sup>4</sup> and from many other contemporary sources there may be obtained information showing the distressing results that followed immediately upon the signing of the bill. Reports of the large number of new arrivals were soon coming from Canada. Hiram Wilson, a missionary at St. Catharines, writing in *The Liberator* of December 13, 1850, says: "Probably not less than 3,000 have taken refuge in this country since the first of September. Only for the attitude of the north there would have been thousands more." He says that his church is thronged with fugitives and that what is true of his own district is true also of other parts of southern Ontario. Henry Bibb, in his paper *The Voice of the Fugitive*<sup>5</sup> published frequent reports of the number of fugitives arriving at Sandwich on the Detroit River. In the issue of December 3, 1851, he reports 17 arrivals in a week. On April 22, 1852, he records 15 arrivals within the last few days and notes that "the Underground Railroad is doing good business this spring." On May 20, 1852, he reports "quite an accession of refugees to our numbers during the last two weeks" and on June 17 notes the visit of agents from Chester, Pennsylvania, preparatory to the movement of a large number of people of color from that place to Canada. On the

<sup>3</sup> *Liberator*, October 18, 1850.

<sup>4</sup> Annual report for 1851, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> A file of this paper for 1851 and 1852 is in the library of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

same date he says: "Numbers of free persons of color are arriving in Canada from Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia, Ohio and Indiana. Sixteen passed by Windsor on the seventh and 20 on the eighth and the cry is 'Still they come.' " The immigration was increasing week by week, for on July 1 it was reported in *The Voice of the Fugitive* that "in a single day last week there were not less than 65 colored emigrants landed at this place from the south. . . . As far as we can learn not less than 200 have arrived within our vicinity since last issue." Almost every number of the paper during 1852 gives figures as to the arrivals of the refugees. On September 23 Bibb reported the arrival of three of his own brothers while on November 4, 1852, there is recorded the arrival of 23 men, women and children in 48 hours. Writing to *The Liberator* of November 12, 1852, Mary E. Bibb said that during the last ten days they had sheltered 23 arrivals in their own home. The American Missionary Association, which had workers among the fugitives in Canada noted in its annual report for 1852 that there had been a large increase of the Negro population during the year<sup>6</sup> while further testimony to the great activity along the border is given by the statement that the Vigilance Committee at Detroit assisted 1,200 refugees in one year and that the Cleveland Vigilance Committee had a record of assisting more than a hundred a month to freedom.<sup>7</sup>

The northern newspapers of the period supply abundant information regarding the consternation into which the Negroes were thrown and their movements to find places of safety. Two weeks after President Fillmore had signed the Fugitive Slave Bill a Pittsburgh despatch to *The Liberator* stated that "nearly all the waiters in the hotels have fled to Canada. Sunday 30 fled; on Monday 40; on Tuesday 50; on Wednesday 30 and up to this time the number that has left will not fall short of 300. They went in large bodies, armed with pistols and bowie knives, determined to

<sup>6</sup> American Missionary Association, *Sixth Annual Report*, 1852, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> Mitchell, *Underground Railroad*, p. 113.

die rather than be captured.”<sup>8</sup> A Hartford despatch of October 18, 1850, told of five Negroes leaving that place for Canada;<sup>9</sup> Utica reported under date of October 2 that 16 fugitive slaves passed through on a boat the day before, bound for Canada, all well armed and determined to fight to the last;<sup>10</sup> *The Eastport Sentinel* of March 12 noted that a dozen fugitives had touched there on the steamer *Admiral*, en route to St. John’s; *The New Bedford Mercury* said: “We are pleased to announce that a very large number of fugitive slaves, aided by many of our most wealthy and respected citizens have left for Canada and parts unknown and that many more are on the point of departure.”<sup>11</sup> The Concord, New Hampshire, *Statesman* reported: “Last Tuesday seven fugitives from slavery passed through this place . . . and they probably reached Canada in safety on Wednesday last. Scarcely a day passes but more or less fugitives escape from the land of slavery to the freedom of Canada . . . via this place over the track of the Northern Railroad.”<sup>12</sup>

Many other examples of the effect of the Fugitive Slave Act might be noted. The Negro population of Columbia, Pennsylvania, dropped from 943 to 487 after the passing of the bill.<sup>13</sup> The members of the Negro community near Sandy Lake in northwestern Pennsylvania, many of whom had farms partly paid for, sold out or gave away their property and went in a body to Canada.<sup>14</sup> In Boston a fugitive slave congregation under Leonard A. Grimes had a church built when the blow fell. More than forty members fled to Canada.<sup>15</sup> Out of one Baptist church in Buffalo more than 130 members fled across the border, a similar migration taking place among the Negro Methodists of the same city

<sup>8</sup> *Liberator*, October 4, 1850.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, October 18, 1850.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, October 4, 1850.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, April 25, 1851.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, May 2, 1851.

<sup>13</sup> Siebert, *Underground Railroad*, p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>15</sup> Stevens, Anthony Burns, a *History*, p. 208.

though they were more disposed to make a stand. At Rochester all but two of the 114 members of the Negro Baptist church fled, headed by their pastor, while at Detroit the Negro Baptist church lost 84 members, some of whom abandoned their property in haste to get away.<sup>16</sup> A letter from William Still, agent of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee, to Henry Bibb at Sandwich says there is much talk of emigration to Canada as the best course for the fugitives.<sup>17</sup> *The Corning Journal* illustrates the aid that was given to the fugitives by northern friends. Fifteen fugitives, men, women and children, came in by train and stopped over night. In the morning a number of Corning people assisted them to Dunkirk and sent a committee to arrange for passage to Canada. The captain of the lake steamer upon which they embarked, very obligingly stopped at Fort Malden, on the Canadian side, for wood and water and the runaways walked ashore to freedom. "The underground railroad is in fine working order," is the comment of *The Journal*. "Rarely does a collision occur, and once on the track passengers are sent through between sunrise and sunset." That time did not dull the terrors of the Fugitive Slave Act is shown by the fact that every fresh arrest would cause a panic in its neighborhood. At Chicago in 1861, almost on the eve of the Civil War, more than 100 Negroes left on a single train following the arrest of a fugitive, taking nothing with them but the clothes on their backs and most of them leaving good situations behind."<sup>18</sup>

The Underground Railroad system was never so successful in all its history as after 1850. Despite the law, and the infamous activities of many of the slave-catchers, at

<sup>16</sup> American Anti-slavery Society, *Eleventh Annual Report*, 1851, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> *The Voice of the Fugitive*, April 9, 1851.

<sup>18</sup> *Cong. Herald*, May 13, 1861, quoted in American Missionary Association, 15th annual report, 1861, p. 28. There is evidence that the Fugitive Slave Law was used in some cases to strike fear into the hearts of Negroes in order to cause them to abandon their property. *The Liberator* of October 25, 1850, quotes the *Detroit Free Press* to the effect that land speculators have been scaring the Negroes in some places in the north in order to get possession of their properties.

least 3,000 fugitives got through to Canada within three months after the bill was signed. This was the estimate of both Henry Bibb and Hiram Wilson and there were probably no men in Canada who were better acquainted with the situation than these two. In *The Voice of the Fugitive* of November 5, 1851, Bibb reported that "the road is doing better business this fall than usual. The Fugitive Slave Law has given it more vitality, more activity, more passengers and more opposition which invariably accelerates business. . . . We can run a lot of slaves through from almost any of the bordering slave states into Canada within 48 hours and we defy the slaveholders and their abettors to beat that if they can. . . . We have just received a fresh lot today and still there is room." *The Troy Argus* learned from "official sources" in 1859 that the Underground Railroad had been doing an unusually large business that year.<sup>19</sup> Bibb's newspaper reports, December 2, 1852, that the underground is working well. "Slaveholders are frequently seen and heard, howling on their track up to the Detroit River's edge but dare not venture over lest the British lion should lay his paw upon their guilty heads." Bibb kept a watchful eye on slave-catchers coming to the Canadian border and occasionally reported their presence in his paper. Underground activity was also noted in *The Liberator*. "The underground railroad and especially the express train, is doing a good business just now. We have good and competent conductors," was a statement in the issue of October 29, 1852.<sup>20</sup>

Not all those who fled to Canada left their property behind. *The Voice of the Fugitive* makes frequent reference to Negroes arriving with plenty of means to take care of themselves. "Men of capital with good property, some of whom are worth thousands, are settling among us from the northern states," says the issue of October 22, 1851, while

<sup>19</sup> American Anti-slavery Society, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report*, 1861, p. 49.

<sup>20</sup> In *The Liberator* of July 30, 1852, a letter from Hiram Wilson, at St. Catharines, says: "Arrivals from slavery are frequent."

in the issue of July 1, 1852, it is noted that "22 from Indiana passed through to Amherstburg, with four fine covered waggons and eight horses. A few weeks ago six or eight such teams came from the same state into Canada. The Fugitive Slave Law is driving out brains and money." In a later issue it was stated "we know of several families of free people of color who have moved here from the northern states this summer who have brought with them property to the amount of £30,000."<sup>21</sup> Some of these people with property joined the Elgin Association settlement at Buxton, purchasing farms and taking advantage of the opportunities that were provided there for education. A letter to *The Voice of the Fugitive* from Ezekiel C. Cooper, recently arrived at Buxton, says: "Canada is the place where we have our rights."<sup>22</sup> He speaks of having purchased 50 acres of land and praises the school and its teacher at Buxton. Cooper came from Northampton, Massachusetts, driven out by the Fugitive Slave Law. A rather unusual case was that of 12 manumitted slaves who were brought to Canada from the South. They had been bequeathed \$1,000 each by their former owner. They all bought homes in the Niagara district.<sup>23</sup>

While fugitives and free Negroes were being harried in the Northern States slaves continued to run away from their masters and seek liberty. "Slaves are making this a great season for running off to Pennsylvania," said the Cumberland, Virginia, *Unionist* in 1851.<sup>24</sup> "A large number have gone in the last week, most of whom were not recaptured." At the beginning of 1851 *The Liberator* had a Buffalo despatch to the effect that 87 runaways from the South had passed through to Canada since the passing of the bill the previous September.<sup>25</sup> Bibb mentions two runaways from North Carolina who were 101 days reaching

<sup>21</sup> *The Voice of the Fugitive*, July 29, 1852.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, July 1, 1852.

<sup>23</sup> *St. Catharine's Journal*, quoted in *The Voice of the Fugitive*, September 23, 1852.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in *The Liberator*, September 12, 1851.

<sup>25</sup> *Liberator*, February 14, 1851.

Canada.<sup>26</sup> The *Detroit Free Press* reported that 29 run-aways crossed to Canada about the end of March, 1859, "the first installment of northern emigration from North Carolina."<sup>27</sup> About the same time *The Detroit Advertiser* announced that "seventy fugitive slaves arrived in Canada by one train from the interior of Tennessee. A week before a company of 12 arrived. At nearly the same time a party of seven and another of five were safely landed on the free soil of Canada, making 94 in all. The underground railroad was never before doing so flourishing a business."<sup>28</sup> The New Orleans *Commercial Bulletin* of December 19, 1860, asserted that 1,500 slaves had escaped annually for the last fifty years, a loss to the South of at least \$40,-000,000. The American Anti-Slavery Society's twenty-seventh report said "Northward migration from slave land during the last year has fully equalled the average of former years."<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting to note that several of the most famous cases that arose under the Fugitive Slave Act had their ending in Canada. Shadrack, Anthony Burns, Jerry McHenry, the Parkers, the Lemmon slaves and others found refuge across the border after experiencing the terrors of the Fugitive Slave legislation. The Shadrack incident was one of the earliest to arise under the new law. Shadrack, a Negro employe in a Boston coffee house, was arrested on February 15, 1851, on the charge of having escaped from slavery in the previous May. As the commissioner before whom he was brought was not ready to proceed, the case was adjourned for three days. As Massachusetts had forbidden the use of her jails in fugitive cases Shadrack was detained in the United States court room at the court house. A mob of people of color broke into the building, rescued the prisoner and he escaped to Canada. The rescue caused great

<sup>26</sup> *The Voice of the Fugitive*, August 27, 1851.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in American Anti-slavery Society, Twenty-seventh Report, 1861.

<sup>28</sup> American Anti-slavery Society, Twenty-seventh Annual Report, 1861, pp. 48-49.

<sup>29</sup> P. 157.

excitement at Washington and five of the rescuers were indicted and tried but the jury disagreed. The incident showed that the new law would be enforced with difficulty in Massachusetts in view of the fact that the mob had been supported by a Vigilance Committee of most respectable citizens.<sup>30</sup>

A few months later, at Syracuse, a respectable man of color named Jerry McHenry was arrested as a fugitive on the complaint of a slaver from Missouri. He made an attempt to escape and failed. The town, however, was crowded with people who had come to a meeting of the County Agricultural Society and to attend the annual convention of the Liberty Party. On the evening of October 1, 1851, a descent was made upon the jail by a party led by Gerrit Smith and Rev. Samuel J. May, both well-known abolitionists. The Negro was rescued, concealed for a few days and then sent on to Canada where he died, at Kingston, in 1853.<sup>31</sup>

A more tragic incident was that known as the Gorsuch case. A slaver named Gorsuch, with his son and some others, all armed, came to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in search of two fugitives. In a house two miles from Lancaster was a Negro family named Parker and they were besieged by the Gorsuchs. The Negroes blew a horn and brought others to their help. Two Quakers who were present were called upon to render help in arresting the Negroes, as they were required to do under the Act, but they refused to aid. In the fighting that took place the elder Gorsuch was killed and his son wounded. The Negroes escaped to Canada where they spent the winter in Toronto and in the spring joined the Elgin Association settlement at Buxton in Kent county.<sup>32</sup>

The Anthony Burns case attracted more attention than any other arising in the execution of the Fugitive Slave

<sup>30</sup> Rhodes, *History of the United States*, I, 210.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 224-25. See also Ward, *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro*, p. 127.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 222-23. See also *The Voice of the Fugitive*, June 3 and July 1, 1852.

Law. Burns, who was a fugitive from Virginia living in Boston, betrayed his hiding place in a letter which fell into the hands of a southern slaver and was communicated to a slave hunter. The slaver tried to coax Burns to go back to bondage peaceably but failing in this he had him arrested and brought before a commissioner who, on June 2, 1854, decided that Burns was a fugitive and must be sent back to slavery. Boston showed its feelings on the day that the Negro was removed from jail to be sent South. Stores were closed and draped in black, bells tolled, and across State Street a coffin was suspended bearing the legend THE DEATH OF LIBERTY. The streets were crowded and a large military force, with a field piece in front, furnished escort for the lone black. Hisses and cries of "shame" came from the crowd as the procession passed. Burns was soon released from bondage, Boston people and others subscribing to purchase his liberty. He was brought North, educated and later entered the ministry. For several years he was a missionary at St. Catharines, Canada, and died there in the sixties.<sup>33</sup>

Along the international boundary there were exciting incidents at times, fugitives being chased to the border and often having narrow escapes from recapture. The Monroe family, mother and several daughters, escaped from slavery in Kentucky in 1856 and were carried by the Underground Railroad to Ann Arbor and on to Detroit, the master in hot pursuit. So close was the chase that as the runaways pulled out from the wharf on the ferry for Windsor, Canada, the master came running down the street crying out "Stop them! stop them!" He was jeered at by the crowd which sympathized with the Negro woman.<sup>34</sup>

In June, 1852, three fugitives arrived in Detroit and in response to frantic messages from Toledo were held for their pursuers. In desperation the Negroes made a savage attack on their jailer, gained their freedom and got across the border with the assistance of friends in Detroit. Re-

<sup>33</sup> Schauler, *History of the United States*, V, 290-291.

<sup>34</sup> Troy, *Hairbreadth Escapes*, pp. 39-43.

wards that were offered for their recapture were useless as the fugitives took care to remain on the Canadian side.<sup>35</sup>

Hiram Wilson tells of an incident that came under his notice at St. Catharines. A beautiful young girl, 14 years of age and almost white, was brought to Buffalo as maid for a slaveholder's daughter travelling in the North. She was spirited off by some Buffalo abolitionists, transferred to a steamer flying the British flag, and landed in Canada. She was taken to St. Catharines and sheltered in the home of Hiram Wilson. The master came over from Buffalo bringing a couple of lawyers with him and tried to secure his property but his demands were refused. The owner claimed that he valued the girl at \$1,000. It was later discovered that she had been sold no less than four times before coming to Canada.<sup>36</sup>

The brutality of the Fugitive Slave Law was shown on more than one occasion along the border. A case that attracted much attention at the time was that of Daniel Davis. He was cook on the steamer *Buckeye*. One day while the vessel was in port at Buffalo he was called up from below. As his head appeared above the deck he was struck a heavy blow by a slave catcher named Benjamin Rust who had a warrant from a United States commissioner for his arrest. The Negro fell back senseless into the hold and on top of a stove, being badly burned. He was brought into court at once and the newspaper accounts relate in detail how he sat during the proceedings "dozing, with blood oozing out of his mouth and nostrils." After a trial that was rushed in a most unseemly way the Negro was ordered delivered over to Rust, who was really agent for one George H. Moore, of Louisville. The brutality of the whole proceeding stirred up deep interest in Buffalo and on a writ of habeas corpus the fugitive was brought before Judge Conkling of the United States Court at Auburn and released. Before there could be further steps taken to hold the Negro he was hur-

<sup>35</sup> *Liberator*, June 11, 1852. See also *The Voice of the Fugitive*, June 17, 1852.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, July 30, 1852.

ried into Canada, where he remained. He was in attendance at the large Negro Convention held in Toronto in September, 1851, and with his head still in bandages afforded striking evidence of the effects of the Slave Law. Rust, Davis's assailant, was afterwards indicted at Buffalo but allowed to go after paying a paltry \$50 fine.<sup>37</sup>

Another memorable border incident occurred at Sandusky, Ohio, in October, 1852. A party of fugitives, two men, two women and several children had been brought from Kentucky and were aboard the steamer *Arrow* about to sail for Detroit when they were all arrested by the alleged owner and taken before the mayor of the town. Rush R. Sloane, a local lawyer, offered to act in their defence. The proceedings were so hurried that no warrant or writ was ready to be produced in court and Sloane signified by a gesture that the Negroes were free. There was an immediate rush for the door on the part of the fugitives and their friends, but even as they fled from the court room the claimant entered calling out: "Here are the papers. I own the slaves. I'll hold you personally responsible for their escape." The fugitives meanwhile had gone to the harbor, entered a sailboat owned by friendly fishermen and were on their way to Canada. The slaver, frantic at seeing his property vanishing, tried in vain to get other fishermen to pursue them. He then hurried to a neighboring town, trying to secure help, but with no more success. Within a few hours the runaways were landed at Port Stanley, safe from all pursuers. The slaver made good his threat to hold Sloane responsible for the loss of his property, entering action and securing a judgment for \$3,000. It is related as one of the pathetic incidents of this case that when the fugitives were first taken off the steamer *Arrow* one of the women dropped her infant child on the ground and disowned it, hoping that it at least would be free if she were condemned to return to slavery.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Liberator*, Sept. 12, 1851; *The Voice of the Fugitive*, Sept. 24, 1851; Anti-slavery Tracts, New Series, No. 15, p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> *Sandusky Commercial Register*, Oct. 21, 1852; *Liberator*, Oct. 29, 1852; Anti-slavery Tracts, New Series, No. 15, p. 24.

With so great an influx of refugees into a country that was sparsely settled, some suffering was inevitable, but contemporary evidence indicates that after all it was but slight. There was probably more distress during the winter of 1850-1 than later on because of the large number who came in during the few months immediately after the passing of the Fugitive Slave Bill. In their haste to find safety many left everything behind, entering Canada with little more than the clothes on their backs. A. L. Power, of Farmington, who visited Windsor at the beginning of 1851, found about a score of families living in an old military barracks, most of them in need of both fuel and clothing. At Sandwich, near by, he also found distress and mentions seeing a family of eight children who were almost nude and who were suffering from the cold.<sup>39</sup> Sickness was, in many cases, a result of the exposure to which the Negroes had been subjected in their effort to reach Canada. Later on, the situation improved and by 1855 the workers of the American Missionary Association reported that "in general, those who have gone there from the United States, even the fugitives, may provide for the wants of their families, after a short residence there; especially if they meet a friendly hand and, more than all, good counsel on their arrival."<sup>40</sup>

Various agencies in both the United States and Canada were active in the work of relieving the distress among the newcomers. The American Anti-Slavery Society early addressed itself to this task. "Several agents," said Bibb, "have during the past year proceeded to Canada to exert the best influence in their power over the fugitives that have flocked to the province in years past and especially those who have gone the past year. They are supplied with the means of instructing the colored population, clothing some of the most destitute fugitives and aiding them in various ways to obtain employment, procure and cultivate land and train up their children. Our friends in Canada are exerting a good influence in the same direction."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> *The Voice of the Fugitive*, February 12, 1851.

<sup>40</sup> Ninth Annual Report, N. Y., 1855, p. 47

<sup>41</sup> American Anti-slavery Society, Eleventh Annual Report, 1851, p. 100.

The fugitives themselves were banded together to aid the newcomers. The Windsor Anti-Slavery Society and the Fugitives' Union were both organized to relieve distress and assist their fellows in making a living.<sup>42</sup> Supplies were sent in from points at considerable distances in some cases, clothing, food, money, and in one case a donation of 2,000 fruit trees from Henry Willis, of Battle Creek, for refugees who were going on the land.<sup>43</sup> Michigan people were exceedingly generous in extending aid and there is record also of supplies sent from Fall River, Whitestown, New Jersey, Boston and other places in New England. There was plenty of work for the Negroes, the fifties being a period of railroad building in western Ontario, so that writing in 1861. William Troy maintained that nine tenths of the fugitives had got along without outside aid of any kind. "The fugitives show a marked disposition to help each other and relieve want," he says. "I could show hundreds of instances of kindheartedness to all persons, irrespective of race."<sup>44</sup>

The organization of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada came largely as a result of the sudden influx of Negroes after 1850 which, perhaps more than anything else, impressed upon Canadians the great issue that was rapidly dividing the neighboring republic. Beginning at Toronto the anti-slavery forces in Canada were organized in the various cities and towns of the province and continued active until the Civil War. There was developed in Canada a marked anti-slavery sentiment which manifested itself in part in the very large number of Canadians who enlisted in the northern armies.<sup>45</sup> The Anti-Slavery Society was also active in extending the helping hand to the fugitives, considerable sums being raised for relief purposes and support being given to educational and other movements designed to elevate the race.

<sup>42</sup> *The Voice of the Fugitive* of January 15, 1851, and November 18, 1852.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1 and May 20, 1852.

<sup>44</sup> Troy, *Hair-breadth Escapes*, pp. 108 and 122.

<sup>45</sup> "The Canadian government reckoned that there had been not less than 40,000 Canadian enlistments in the American Army during the Civil War."—Goldwin Smith's *Correspondence* (letter to Moberly Bell), p. 377.

In Canada the refugees were absolutely safe from the operations of the Fugitive Slave Law. No loophole could be found in the Canadian law that would permit the rendition of a slave. A famous case arose in the Canadian courts on the eve of the Civil War when a Negro, John Anderson, was arrested charged with the murder of a slaver named Diggs some years before, the crime having been committed while Anderson was trying to make his escape from slavery. Canadian opinion was much aroused and though the first decision of the courts was that the Negro must be extradited this finding was overruled from England and in the end the prisoner was released on a technicality. It was made quite clear that the British Government would view with marked disapproval any decision in Canada that would return a refugee to slavery.

There were doubtless numerous attempts to kidnap Negroes who had escaped to Canada, especially in the border towns, but such attempts must have been rarely successful. An open attempt to induce a Canadian official to act as slave catcher was exposed in the *Montreal Gazette* of January 13, 1855, when there was published a letter written by one, John H. Pape, of Frederick, Maryland, to Sheriff Hays, of Montreal, proposing that the latter should use his power to arrest Negroes who would then be turned over to Pape. The proceeds from the sale of the captured chattels would be divided evenly, according to the plan suggested.

Canadians took a measure of pride in the sense of security with which their Negro immigrants could look back at their pursuers. That the slavery issue in the United States was rapidly coming to a head was also recognized in Canada during the fifties and this, too, may have been an influence with the Canadians in doing what they could to assist the great number of more or less helpless people who came among them. Viewed in the light of more than half a century it can be seen that the influence of Canada in determining the course of the slavery issue was by no means slight.

FRED LONDON